

Borders

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Drawn in ink or blood,
they unspool from history
to split mountains and valleys,
meander in rivers that twist
and turn, dragging their banks
to new configurations, adding to,
subtracting from, this dominion
or that. Invisible, except
when a fence or wall defines
them, ramparts that open
only through drawbridge or gate
guarded by sirens and guns.
Those you can step across
are silent. The same weeds grow
on either side. Perhaps a sign
announces some new territory,
but the soil does not change
its allegiance: clay or silt,
loam or dust. The name
of the tree that straddles
a border may change from one
language to another, but its roots
are anchored in the same earth

and draw up water that travels
without passport or visa.
Still, coastal nations cast their nets
three miles into the ocean's
tides and storms, and even the sky
is bound with invisible lines
dividing yours from mine.